

NUTRITION

Diet: Tips for Improving Your Health - Part One

Good health comes from eating a well-balanced diet. This means making sure you regularly eat foods that have a lot of vitamins and minerals in them, as well as foods that are not high in fat. You should drink milk every day to give your bones the calcium that makes them strong. Foods that are high in fiber are good for you, and you should try to eat several fruits and vegetables every day.

Do I need to make changes in my diet?

If you answer yes to any of the following questions, you may need to talk about nutrition with your doctor:

- Has your doctor talked with you about a medical problem or a risk factor, such as high blood pressure or high cholesterol?
- Did your doctor tell you that a health condition could be improved by a change in your diet?
- Does diabetes, cancer, heart disease or osteoporosis run in your family?
- Are you overweight or have you gained weight over the years?
- Do you eat foods high in fat and low in nutritional value?
- Do you have questions about what kinds of foods you should eat or whether you should take vitamins?
- Do you think that you would benefit from seeing a nutritionist? (A nutritionist is a registered dietitian who specializes in nutrition counseling.)

What changes can I make now in my diet?

Almost everyone can benefit from cutting back on fat in their diet. If your current diet is high in fat, try making these changes:

- Eat 3 to 4 servings of low-fat dairy products every day. You can use reduced-fat cheeses and non-fat yogurt. For example, if you make pizza at home, try using part-skim mozzarella cheese on top.
- Eat baked, grilled and broiled foods rather than fried foods. Take the skin off before eating chicken. Eat fish at least once a week.
- Cut back on the extra fat that sneaks into your diet, such as butter or margarine on bread, sour cream on baked potatoes, and salad dressings on salad.
- Eat plenty of fruits and vegetables with your meals and as snacks.

